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June 28, 2022

## **ACCESS Harris County, an Innovative Initiative to Launch Following Commissioners Court Approval of IT Contract**

*ACCESS is an innovative care model focusing on coordinated, client-centered delivery of services to vulnerable residents*

**Houston** – Today the Harris County Commissioners Court executed a contract with IBM to develop enabling technology for its ACCESS (Accessing Coordinated Care and Empowering Self-Sufficiency) Harris County Initiative that focuses on providing coordinated services to vulnerable residents in need of services across the County’s safety net system and programs.

The mission of ACCESS Harris County is to identify the most vulnerable residents in the community—that often are in need of services to address economic housing, and food insecurities, behavioral health, and physical health issues, with many of them, also intersecting with the criminal justice system—and help them receive the care and support they need for long term stability.

“I am delighted to have championed the creation of ACCESS Harris County, which will be crucial to improving health, social and economic outcomes for our residents. In my precinct, we have the highest number of social disparities related to education, economic and environmental issues along with the lowest levels of health coverage and the highest mortality rates,” said Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia. “I’m proud that the Resolution I proposed to develop and implement ACCESS, which calls for a holistic model of care, was unanimously approved by the Commissioners Court. This effort will not only improve the health, well-being, and self-sufficiency of vulnerable residents it will also improve the effective and efficient administration of our limited government resources.”

This initiative will be led out of Harris County Public Health (HCPH) and encompasses the work of multiple County departments, agencies, and community-based organizations aimed at serving vulnerable residents with shared needs across their agencies.

The solution IBM is developing will create an integrated data hub along with care coordination technology to enable ACCESS through a “no wrong door approach,” for participants and empower them to receive the services necessary to enable better outcomes for residents.

“ACCESS Harris County is a bold challenge to make necessary changes to the way we think about service delivery and work collectively as County agencies to support our most vulnerable community members,” said HCPH Executive Director Barbie Robinson. “It serves as a blue-print and a model for how local government should provide high-quality services and is a proven model for allowing individuals to not only access the safety but to get out of it to greater self-sufficiency and improved well-being.

Harris County Commissioners Court unanimously approved the initiative presented by Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia to support ACCESS Harris County on July 20, 2021.

*HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.*

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This holistic model of care will be more cost-effective by integrating and coordinating the resources we have. ACCESS will focus on four primary populations during this pilot:

- Homeless individuals with physical or behavioral health conditions
- Violence prevention
- Re-entry
- Transitional age youth aging out of foster care system

ACCESS Harris County leverages an award-winning care coordination model implemented in various jurisdictions, including Clark County, NV, and the CA counties of San Diego, Orange, and Sonoma. Executive Director Robinson led and developed ACCESS Sonoma County while she served as Director for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services prior to her coming to HCPH.

Safety Net Departments and Agencies Include:

- Harris County Public Health
- Community Supervision & Corrections Department
- Department of Economic, Equity, and Opportunity
- Harris County Community Services Department
- Harris County Department of Education
- Harris County Housing Authority
- Harris County Juvenile Probation Department
- Harris County District Attorney's Office
- Harris County Libraries
- Harris County Resources for Children and Adults
- Harris County Sheriff's Office
- Harris Health System
- The Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice Parole Division Region III/Area Agency on Parole
- City of Houston Health Department

For additional information please visit our webpage at [hcphtx.org](http://hcphtx.org).

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